

**2007 Farm Bill Hearing
House Committee on Agriculture
Fayetteville, North Carolina
February 6, 2006**

**Comments by: Mr. Thomas (Tommy) E. Porter, Jr.
Porter Farms, Inc.
Concord, North Carolina**

Good afternoon, Chairman Goodlatte, Ranking Member Peterson,
Committee members and other hearing participants.

My name is Tommy Porter. My family and I own and operate Porter Farms in Cabarrus County here in North Carolina. Our farming operation is diversified – it includes poultry production, a cow-calf operation and pork production with a 2200 sow, farrow-to-wean hog facility that we operate on contract with a major pork integrated company.

I am here today representing my fellow pork producers in the state of North Carolina. I think I should also tell you that I serve as county president for the Cabarrus County Farm Bureau, a director of Carolina Farm Credit, chairman of our Extension advisory committee and a member of the Cabarrus County Planning and Zoning Committee.

As I come before you today, I want to thank each of you for the opportunity to provide input as you consider the federal agricultural policies that will affect me and my fellow North Carolina farmers. I thank you for giving producers like me a chance to provide input in your planning.

Let me begin with some general comments and thoughts.

I understand that a Farm Bill is a comprehensive piece of legislation. From my review of its purpose and history, I also understand that a Farm Bill's focus should be on farm programs and policies to enhance the competitiveness of U.S. agriculture.

This includes conservation and trade programming that are vital to our country's pork producers. On the other hand, it does not include outside interests on behalf of those who want to hurt farmers, food security and resource conservation.

Please allow me to expand.

First, regarding the subject of conservation and natural resource stewardship, North Carolina's pork producers are committed to running productive operations while meeting or even exceeding environmental expectations. We have fought hard for science-based, affordable and effective regulatory policies that achieve the goals of today's environmental statutes. In order for us to meet these costly demands while maintaining production, the federal government must provide support to help us defray some of the costs of compliance through conservation programs of the Farm Bill.

We need simple conservational title programs that give us cost-share or technical assistance. By simple, I mean processes and programs that do not complicate or hinder the delivery of services in the field. Whether it's the opportunity for me or fellow producers to install cup waterers in our barns for better water management or the chance to purchase additional irrigation equipment, we need EQUIP and other conservation provisions.

With air quality objectives and requirements likely ahead of us, we will need EQUIP to help us there too.

While we need simple conservation title programs, we also must have programs that increase quality and safety, and promote the role of pork in a healthy diet. And that leads me to the subject of market access and trade. Expanded access to foreign markets, continuing promotion of U.S. exports using Market Access Program (MAP) funding and aggressive pursuit of export business all mean a great deal to U.S. producers.

At present, there is strong global demand for pork products. With 96% of the world's population outside of the United States, programs and trade efforts in other countries are important to America's pork producers. In fact, I understand it is estimated that U.S. pork prices have been \$33.60 per hog higher than they would have been in the absence of exports.

Furthermore, I want to stress another point - - farm programs that help manage or control costs of production related to input costs are vitally important to America's producers like me. Corn and soybean meal comprise a significant cost of raising pigs. The entire impact of feed grain programs should be carefully considered, including their impact on the cost of raising pork and other livestock.

Also, we realize people and organizations with extreme agendas will be calling on you to expand the focus of the Farm Bill to include their special interests. In advance of those distractions, I thank you for keeping your focus on a national farm policy that stabilizes food and fiber production for everyone. Outside agendas related to animal welfare guidelines, packer ownership bans, and other activist interests should not be the focus of a national farm bill. Many of these groups who will lobby you are well-funded and strategically coordinated and would like to ban farm animal

production. I ask that you not be influenced by people who are not animal care experts and really have no knowledge of the animal care and husbandry practices that I employ on my farm everyday.

In summary, as a pork producer, I stress the idea that Farm Bill programs should be aimed at reducing or controlling costs of production, increasing the prices received for pork products, and increasing the quality of U.S. pork products. Simply put, a national farm policy bill that provides stabilization of food and fiber production is a benefit to everyone - - farmers and consumers.

Thank you for allowing me to visit with you today and sharing my perspective as a farmer.



Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Required Witness Disclosure Form

House Rules* require nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of Federal grants received since October 1, 2004.

Name: Thomas Edwards Porter, Jr.

Address: 4455 Mt. Pleasant Rd. South

Telephone: Concord, N.C. 28025

Organization you represent (if any): _____

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2004, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract. House Rules do NOT require disclosure of federal payments to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicare benefits, farm program payments, or assistance to agricultural producers:

Source: _____ Amount: _____

Source: _____ Amount: _____

2. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) the organization has received since October 1, 2004, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:

Source: _____ Amount: _____

Source: _____ Amount: _____

Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you: ☒

Signature: Thomas E Porter

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(4) of the U.S. House of Representatives provides: Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof. In the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by any entity represented by the witness.

PLEASE ATTACH DISCLOSURE FORM TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.

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U.S. House of Representatives
Information Required From Non-governmental Witnesses**

House rules require non-governmental witnesses to provide their resume or biographical sketch prior to testifying. If you do not have a resume or biographical sketch available, please complete this form.

1. Name: Thomas Edwards Porter, Jr.
2. Business Address: 4455 Mt. Pleasant Rd. South
Concord, N.C. 28025
3. Business Phone Number: 704-786-9551
4. Organization you represent: NC Pork Council
5. Please list any occupational, employment, or work-related experience you have which add to your qualification to provide testimony before the Committee:
Porter Farms, Inc. - Owner/operator of diversified
farming operation which includes a 2200 sow-to-
wean swine farm, four pullet houses and a
250-300 brood cows/cow-calf operation
6. Please list any special training, education, or professional experience you have which add to your qualifications to provide testimony before the Committee:
Director, Carolina Farm Credit
County President, Cabarrus County Farm Bureau
Chair, Cabarrus County Cooperative Extension Advisory Committee
Member, Cabarrus County Planning and Zoning Commission
7. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list the capacity in which you are representing that organization, including any offices or elected positions you hold:

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM OR YOUR BIOGRAPHY TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.